



OCCG: 1245

**FILE NOTE**

**Agency:** Hunter Aboriginal Children's Services  
**Nature of contact:** Meeting  
**Date:** 11 January 2012

**Notes:** Due to concerns raised as a result of ongoing lack of progress towards accreditation and the recruitment of a new A/CEO, a meeting was requested by the Children's Guardian.

The meeting was attended by members of the Board including the Chairperson Karen Elphick, the A/CEO Terry Chenery, Janet Vickers (DCF CS via telelink), Amanda Bridges (AbSec Board and Biripi), Peter Jones (AbSec), Kerryn Boland, Wendy Lawson and Alii Prior.

Update on progress towards Accreditation provided. Kerryn advised that it is imperative the agency can demonstrate significant progress or the agency will not achieve accreditation and transitioning children out of placement will be the only option. Terry advised that Jessica Cox from BenSoc will continue working with the agency towards this goal and a meeting was scheduled with her Thurs 12 Jan. She will be working on-site each Thursday. Terry has a strong background in governance and is focused on stabilising the agency.

Kerryn emphasised the importance of governance driving the accreditation process. Members of the Board advised that internal reports had suggested that the agency was on track to achieve accreditation. Kerryn suggested that perhaps the Board had not been asking the correct questions and the importance of the Board reflecting on their individual and collective skill set to determine if they had the capacity to drive the agency and provide sufficient governance.

The Board appeared unclear on how often and when they meet but agreed that a commitment to meeting regularly to keep reviewing progress was critical.

Amanda Bridges offered assistance from herself and Dana from Burrun Dalai and also stresses the need for members of the Board to remain focused and committed to the process for at least the next 6 months.

An Action Plan needs to be driven by a cohesive senior management team and to date this has not been evident. Terry advised that he will be scheduling regular meetings with senior staff management team.

Kerryn requests that the Board review their capacity to achieve the requirements of accreditation and be in a position to be ready by Nov 2012. She requests an outcome of this internal review by end March. A meeting date for 28 March was set.

Terry requested the last 12 months accreditation reports.

Kerryn asked if the Board actually saw the reports and Karen Elphick advised that they had not and had just been kept apprised verbally by Adrian. Kerryn suggested that they ensure they do request the reports after each visit by the Children's Guardian.

**Alii Prior**  
**Senior Project Officer - Accreditation**

Kerryn advises that she has the capacity to suspend any further referrals being made to the agency and this is a possibility. She will keep CS apprised of the agency's progress.

The agency currently has 55 children and young people in placement.

It was agreed that the 2012 Program will be held off until the agency has met with the Children's Guardian in March to advise if they feel they want to proceed.

Alli Prior will meet with Terry next week to provide further detail on the November assessment.

**Action:** Ensure that November assessment has been signed off and provided to Terry prior to meeting Wednesday 25 January.